

SECTION 8

Coordination with Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Tribal Government

This section includes information on the following required element:

Element 7: descriptions of the plans for coordinating, to the extent feasible, the development, implementation, review, and revision of the Plan-Strategy with Federal, State, and local agencies and Indian tribes that manage significant land and water areas within the State or administer programs that significantly affect conservation of identified species and habitats.

8.1 Coordinating the CWCS Development

The following subsections provide information on various land management or conservation agencies with a presence in North Dakota. In addition to individual meetings or discussions, there were several coordination efforts which involved all of the agencies or organizations listed in this section, including Indian tribes, plus additional contacts not listed. These efforts included:

- Providing a document detailing the history of SWG, CWCS requirements, and a working draft list of species of conservation priority to roughly 60 agencies, groups, or local experts. This document, mailed in February 2004, provided an opportunity for those groups to review the draft list and give input on the draft SoCP list. Approximately twenty of those responded with comments. This feedback was used to finalize the SoCP list.
- In July of 2004, the SoCP list was finalized and published in the July issue of North Dakota Outdoors. This magazine was sent to all original reviewers, additional contacts, and approximately 30,000 subscribers in North Dakota and other states.
- Arranged an aquatics expert meeting on October 27, 2004 to gather information on threats, conservation actions, monitoring and survey efforts needed for fish SoCP. Those in attendance included NDGFD, NDDOH, and USFWS staff.
- Arranged a North Dakota All-bird Workshop on December 7-8, 2004 to educate participants on the various national/regional/ state bird initiatives, discuss priority bird issues, and provide an open discussion session on the needs of bird SoCP for the North Dakota CWCS. Nearly 60 individuals attended with representatives from nearly all the agencies mentioned below plus individuals from farm groups, birding groups, and other conservation groups looking to partner with North Dakota, such as the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.
- Arranged a joint mammal, reptile, and amphibian expert meeting on December 15, 2004 to gather information on threats, conservation actions, monitoring and survey efforts needed for small mammal, reptile, and amphibians of North Dakota. Twelve individuals attended from various agencies and Universities.
- In June of 2005 a draft of the state's CWCS was distributed to roughly 60 agencies, groups and others to review and provide comment.

8.1.a US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS)

The USFWS is an agency of the Department of the Interior. Its mission is to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Among its major duties is the protection of endangered species and migratory birds. It also manages 93 million acres in the National Wildlife Refuge system. In North Dakota, the USFWS manages 63 refuges totaling more than 290,000 acres and 11 wetland management districts containing 254,000 acres of waterfowl production areas. The field office for North Dakota is in Bismarck.

- Met with USFWS HAPET office staff on April 25, 2003 to discuss SWG program and opportunities for information sharing and other partnership endeavors.
- Met with USFWS HAPET office staff on November 24, 2003 to discuss data sharing ideas.

- Attended February 4-6, 2004 PIF population objectives workshop.
- Met with the assistant regional director from the region 6 USFWS office on June 30, 2004 to discuss SWG progress and conducted field reviews of ongoing projects.
- Met with Ecological Services staff from Bismarck on August 11, 2004 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities to provide input.

8.1.b US Forest Service (USFS)

The Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that manages public lands as multiple-use in national forests and grasslands. The USFS manages 1,103,712 acres of land in western and southeastern North Dakota. The Little Missouri National Grasslands (1,028,000 acres) in western North Dakota and the Shyenenne National Grasslands (70,200 acres) along with land in South Dakota are coordinated under the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) office in Bismarck, North Dakota. These public lands are home to numerous species including a number of North Dakota's Species of Conservation Priority.

- Met with DPG biologist on March 13, 2003 to discuss USFS projects and potential SWG projects.
- Met with USFS staff on March 27, 2003 to discuss issues associated with prairie dog managements on their lands.
- Met with USFS staff on August 31, 2004 to collect input and discuss UND golden eagle project.
- January 20, 2005 met with DPG biologist for an update and status on SWG projects of mutual concern or where partnering is occurring on projects.

8.1.c US Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The BLM is an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior that administers 261 million surface acres of America's public lands, located primarily in 12 western states. It also manages the subsurface mineral rights to 699 million acres nation wide including Alaska. In North Dakota, BLM manages 59,482 surface acres and over 5.6 million subsurface acres.

- Met with the BLM wildlife biologist from the Dickinson office on August 31, 2004 to discuss role of the BLM in SWG issues and opportunities to contribute in the development of the CWCS.

8.1.d US Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE)

The ACOE is charged with planning, designing, building and operating water resources and other civil works projects including navigation, flood control, environmental protection, and disaster response. They also design and manage for military lands and assist with engineering projects of other federal agencies. North Dakota is divided between two ACOE district offices, one in Omaha and the other in St. Paul. The Omaha district has jurisdiction over the Missouri River and all waterways to the west. The St. Paul district is charged with operation east of the Missouri River.

- December 2, 2004 met with ACOE biologists in Riverdale to discuss ACOE participation in SWG projects and opportunities to contribute in the development of the CWCS.

8.1.e US Geological Survey - Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center (NPWRC)

The mission of the U.S. Geological Survey is to provide reliable scientific information to: describe and understand the earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; assist others in managing water, biological, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect quality of life. The USGS provides a broad range of national expertise in geography, geology, hydrology, and biology. The USGS biological resource division studies assist in maintaining healthy ecosystems and natural resources so that these habitats can continue to provide food, energy, medicine, transportation, and recreation.

Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center (NPWRC) is one of 18 science and technology centers in the biological resources division, administratively positioned in the central region, and geographically located in the northern Great Plains. The NPWRC is located in Jamestown, North Dakota.

- Met with NPWRC staff on May 31, 2002 to discuss the GAP project and its potential use in the CWCS.
- Met with NPWRC researchers on April 2, 2003 to discuss SWG issues, current research projects and potential areas of future SWG needs.
- Conducted a mammal and herptile "experts" workshop at NPWRC on December 15, 2004

8.1.f US Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The NRCS is an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture that operates at the national, regional, and state levels. It offers technical assistance through cost share, as well as financial assistance programs to private landowner for the conservation of soil, water, and other natural resources. Many of these programs are funded by the current Farm Bill. They also work closely with state and federal agencies to achieve their goals.

- Met with the NRCS's regional wildlife biologist on December 14, 2004 to discuss SWG and NRCS programs and opportunities to identify conservation practices. The Department will provide input to the NRCS to help guide priorities for SoCP.

8.1.g North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD)

The NDGFD is the state agency charged with protection, conservation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use.

- Nongame biologists within the NDGFD have updated other agency staff on the SWG program and the progress/development of the CWCS through presentations at annual staff meetings, distributing weekly email notes, and informal one-on-one discussions.
- Numerous biologists within the NDGFD have also been asked to review and provide comments on various sections and drafts of the CWCS.

8.1.h North Dakota Parks and Recreation/Natural Heritage Program (NDPR/NHP)

The NDPR/NHP is a program developed in coordination with The Nature Conservancy to be the repository of unique records. The Natural Heritage Program operates a database for records of 230 plant species and 180 animal species that are endangered, threatened, rare, or declining in North Dakota. The NDPR/NHP has also developed a classification of approximately 100 aquatic, terrestrial and non-vegetated natural communities. It manages 13,000 acres of land in ND.

- Met with the coordinator of the Natural Resources Division on March 4, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and potential projects for partnerships on including development of an improved incidental reporting system. The NDGFD agreed to fund a program upgrade to Biotics with SWG funds.
- Met with Natural Resources Divisions to initiate a SWG project to upgrade the NDPR/NHP database and to better track SoCP in January of 2004.

8.1.i North Dakota State Land Department (NDSLDD)

This state agency is divided into five sections responsible for the management of land held in trust for state schools and institutions. These sections are surface management, mineral management, unclaimed properties, energy development, and investments. It owns and manages 713,994 surface acres in North Dakota.

- Met with NDSLDD staff on November 12, 2004 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities to partner on conservation actions.

8.1.j Colleges and Universities

North Dakota has 11 colleges and universities. Professors from several of these schools have been solicited for information, or are conducting studies for use in North Dakota's CWCS.

- Professors from a number of North Dakota's institutions were provided background information on the SWG program in October of 2003 and queried for interest in future research.
- Several professors were asked to conduct reviews and provide comments on various drafts of the CWCS.
- Several professors with expertise in specific taxonomic areas were invited to attend workshops in 2004 and 2005 to identify potential threats and conservation actions for SoCP.
- The NDGFD has initiated SWG related projects with the University of Montana, University of North Dakota and St. Cloud State University. These projects include survey work on grassland birds, raptors, small mammals and herptiles.

8.1.k Ducks Unlimited (DU)

Ducks Unlimited is a private organization that conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North American waterfowl. The Great Plains regional office is located in Bismarck, North Dakota.

- Met with DU staff on July 1, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities for partnering.
- Initiated a study of grassland nesting shorebirds and raptors with DU on January 1, 2004.
- Conducted a field review of a SWG project being conducted by DU on June 6, 2004 to compile video footage and assess study techniques.
- Met with DU staff on November 30, 2004 to discuss status of ongoing SWG project and determine future opportunities.

8.1.l The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

TNC is a private organization whose mission is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters that they need to survive. TNC owns and manages a small number of properties in North Dakota including Cross Ranch, Davis Ranch, and John E. Williams preserve.

- Met with TNC's ND representative on July 1, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities to partner.
- Met with TNC staff and others to discuss bird planning initiatives for North Dakota and other Great Plains states at the November 13-14, 2003 TNC bird experts meeting in Bismarck, ND.
- Met with TNC staff and others to discuss aquatic planning initiatives for the Northern Mixed Grass Steppe at the November 19-20, 2003 TNC aquatics experts meeting in Aberdeen, SD.
- Met with TNC staff and others to discuss aquatic planning initiatives for the Northern Tall Grass Prairie at the March 18-19, 2004 TNC aquatics experts meeting in Grand Forks, ND.

8.1.m Audubon Society

Audubon is a conservation organization whose mission is to protect natural ecosystems with a focus on birds. The Audubon Society has one chapter in the state.

- Met with the North Dakota Chapter of Audubon Society executive director on October 20, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities to partner.
- North Dakota Audubon Chapter staff has been invited to numerous planning discussions, meetings and work groups.

8.1.n Pheasants Forever (PF)

Pheasants Forever is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of pheasant and other wildlife populations in North America through habitat improvement, land management, public awareness, and education. There are 24 local chapters of Pheasants Forever in the state.

- Met with the regional wildlife biologist on June 25, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and the opportunities to partner.

8.1.o Delta Waterfowl (Delta)

Delta is a privately funded organization whose mission is to provide knowledge, future leaders, solutions and its passion for waterfowl to scientists, resource managers, waterfowlers, conservationists and the public to enhance waterfowl populations while securing the future of waterfowling. North Dakota currently has three chapters.

- Met with Delta staff on October 2, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities to partner.

8.1.p North Dakota Natural Resources Trust (NDNRT)

The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust's mission is to preserve, restore, manage, and enhance wetlands and associated wildlife habitat, grassland conservation and riparian areas in North Dakota. The group's board is made up of six members, three appointed by the governor, and three from various NGOs within the state.

- Met with the executive director of the NDNRT on July 7, 2003 to discuss SWG issues and opportunities to partner.

- January 7, 2004 again met with the Executive Director of the NDNRT on January 7, 2004 to discuss potential SWG projects (i.e., easements) along the Missouri River.

8.1.g Tribal Government

North Dakota includes all or parts of five reservations within the states boundaries. These are Spirit Lake Nation, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Three Affiliated Tribes, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate.

- The NDGFD has provided tribal chairmen with information on SWG issues through various mailings. For example, each of the tribes were asked to review and provide comment on the initial draft SoCP. To date, a staff level point of contact for any of the tribes has not yet been developed.

8.1.r Neighboring States

North Dakota is bordered on the west by Montana, east by Minnesota, and to the south by South Dakota. Each state is also in the planning and developmental process of a CWCS.

- Met South Dakota Game Fish and Parks staff and other agencies from South Dakota on November 19-20, 2002 at the TNC aquatics meeting in Aberdeen, SD.
- Participated in a March 31, 2003 conference call with various states discussing burrowing owl conservation issues.
- Met with Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota provincial land resource agencies and academia at the MT/WY All-Bird workshop on August 20-21, 2003 in Billings, MT.
- Met with regional and national land resource agencies and NGO's at the September 8-12, 2003 IAFWA national meeting in Madison, WI.
- Participated in monthly DAT conference calls with other USFWS region 6 states, USFWS regional directors, and various NGOs during 2004 and 2005.
- Met with regional and national land resource agencies and NGOs at the September 2004, national SWG meeting in Nebraska City, NE.
- Participated in a conference call on October 29, 2004 with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks SWG staff to discuss progress on each state's CWCS and opportunities to partner on future projects.

8.1.s Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV)

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV) includes one-third (100,000 square miles) of North America's Prairie Pothole Region, encompassing counties within North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and Iowa. The PPJV was formed in 1987 as one of the original six priority conservation areas designated by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan of 1986. The PPJV is a partnership of conservation agencies and organizations that share a common vision for PPR wildlife, their habitats, and people. Since its inception, the PPJV has secured over \$15 million in NAWCA funding and partners have provided over \$26 million in match to conserve, enhance, and restore over 600,000 acres of grassland and wetlands in North Dakota.

- Department nongame staff has regularly attended PPJV technical committee meetings and participated in review of the revised implementation plan.

8.1.t Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV)

The Northern Great Plains Joint Venture encompasses counties within North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. The NGPJV was formed in 2002 and is the first all-bird joint venture. As a fairly new joint venture, partnerships continue to take shape along with a biological foundation on which to identify and implement all-bird landscape level conservation.

- NDGFD nongame staff is on the NGPJV technical committee.
- The NDGFD has provided SWG funds to this joint venture for the purpose of securing a science coordinator to amass information and build the biological foundation for all-bird conservation.

8.1.u North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (NDCTWS)

The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 as an international, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization for professionals, students, and laypersons active and interested in wildlife research,

management, education and administration. The NDCTWS is an active affiliate of TWS. The NDCTWS was founded in 1963 and incorporated in 1981 under the laws of North Dakota. The NDCTWS provides expertise in advising legislative and judicial processes surrounding the controversial management of many natural resource assets including plant and animal communities of North Dakota.

- NDGFD staff provided a presentation to the members of the Chapter on the status of the SWG program and the state's CWCS at the annual meeting of the NDCTWS in February 2004.
- A chapter committee for SWG was formed at the 2005 annual business meeting.

8.1.v Dakota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (DAFS)

The American Fisheries Society was founded in 1870 as an international, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization. The Dakota Chapter was originally organized as the Upper Missouri River Chapter in 1963 and was re-named in 1987 as the Dakota Chapter to include North and South Dakota.

- NDGFD staff provided a presentation to the members of the chapter on the status of the SWG program and the state's CWCS at the annual meeting of the DAFS in March 2005.

8.2 Agency Coordination for CWCS Implementation and Revision

The NDGFD has expended considerable effort in soliciting agency input for developing North Dakota's CWCS. Contact with most of the agencies that have an interest and/or expertise to contribute to the process has been made. The feedback and input these agencies provided was quite helpful and contributed significantly to the CWCS.

At some point in the future, the CWCS will change to more of an implementation or operational phase. Presumably, once the threats that are causing a species to decline have been identified, along with the conservation actions needed to stem the decline, implementing those measures can begin. For North Dakota the evolution to an implementation phase will be different depending on the SoCP. For example, considerably more is known about some species (e.g. birds) and we will be in a position to initiate implementation measures for these species sooner than for others that have data gaps.

As the NDGFD moves forward toward implementation of the CWCS, solicitation of input from partners (e.g. participating federal, state, local agencies, universities, general public) will continue. Input will be gathered through a variety of means including, but not limited to, distribution of study results and findings, joint work groups, agency meetings, written correspondence, etc. The collective participation and input of these groups is an ongoing, essential part of implementing the CWCS. Their involvement did not simply end with the completion of the strategic phase of the CWCS.